



RESEARCH NOTE LS-54

LAKE STATES FOREST EXPERIMENT STATION • U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Veneer Log Production in the Lake States  
Continues General Decline, 1963

The veneer log harvest in the Lake States in 1963 was 50.5 million board feet. Standard veneer logs used for the better grades of veneer accounted for 43.9 million board feet; container veneer logs used for box and basket veneers made up the remaining 6.6 million board feet. Wisconsin, with a harvest of 25.2 million board feet, led the Lake States in volume of veneer logs cut. Michigan, with 15.3 million and Minnesota with 10.0 million board feet accounted for the remaining output. Detailed production data, shown in table 1, were derived from the Station's canvass of the Lake States veneer industry.

Birch, hard maple, oak, and basswood made up nearly three-fourths of the volume cut. The remainder came primarily from elm and walnut, with lesser amounts from other species.

Local timber operators shipped 5.5 million board feet of standard veneer logs to mills outside the Lake States. Three-fourths of these exports were from Michigan.

Lake States mills received 52.7 million board feet of logs in 1963. Those in Wisconsin were the principal consumers, receiving 80 percent of the volume (table 2). Nearly 45.0 million board feet came from local timber and 7.7 million from areas outside the Lake States. Timber operators in Canada shipped 5.9 million board feet to Lake States mills, while most of the remaining 1.8 million board feet came from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri. Birch and hard maple comprised three-fourths of the incoming shipments. Mills utilizing standard grade logs received 46.1 million board feet, and container mills the remaining 6.6 million board feet. In addition, container mills received 2,100 cords of wood for heading stock.

During World War II and for several years thereafter, the Lake States veneer industry maintained a high level of production. About 1950, production took a downturn and has been on the decline since. The loss of defense contracts, competition from substitute products and from other areas, and the scarcity of high-quality timber have all contributed to the downward trend. Fewer mills

operate now than 10 or 15 years ago as shown below.

	Minn.	Wis.	Mich.	Total
1946				
Standard	1	23	6	30
Container	8	32	16	56
1954				
Standard	1	21	4	26
Container	8	26	19	53
1963				
Standard	2	17	4	23
Container	5	14	5	24

The peak in production was in 1948 when 117 million board feet of veneer logs were cut in the Lake States. The 1962 cut of 48 million feet was the lowest in many years. The sharpest decline has been in container grade logs. From a high of 45 million feet in 1948, production dropped to 7 million board feet in 1962 and 1963 (fig. 1). Standard grade log production reached a peak in 1946 when 74 million board feet were cut; the 40 million board feet cut in 1958 was a low point.

Michigan, for many years the leader in production, dropped behind Wisconsin in the late fifties:

Production in million board feet for: <sup>1</sup>				
	Minn.	Wis.	Mich.	Total
1946				
Standard	2	22	50	74
Container	1	7	29	37
1954				
Standard	8	19	18	45
Container	2	8	17	27
1963				
Standard	8	22	13	43
Container	2	3	2	7

<sup>1</sup> International 1/4-inch rule.

Actually, most of the production decline has been in Michigan: from a high in 1946 of 79 million feet, the cut has declined to 15 million board feet.



Table 1.--Production and imports of veneer logs, Lake States, 1963

(Thousand board feet, Int'l 1/4-inch rule)

Species	Destination	Production by states <sup>1/</sup>				Imports		Total receipts
		Minn.	Wis.	Mich.	Region	Other <sup>2/</sup>	Canada	
Aspen	Minn.	948	-	-	948	-	82	1,030
	Wis.	35	196	103	334	-	-	334
	Mich.	-	-	241	241	-	-	241
	Total	983	196	344	1,523	-	82	1,605
Ash	Minn.	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Wis.	149	418	51	618	10	-	628
	Mich.	-	-	24	24	-	-	24
	Total	150	418	75	643	10	-	653
Basswood	Minn.	1,326	-	-	1,326	-	-	1,326
	Wis.	1,217	3,200	519	4,936	129	1	5,066
	Mich.	-	5	336	341	-	11	352
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
	Total	2,543	3,206	855	6,604	129	12	6,744
Beech	Minn.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Wis.	-	80	86	166	-	-	166
	Mich.	-	-	115	115	-	-	115
	Total	-	80	201	281	-	-	281
Birch	Minn.	644	-	-	644	-	63	707
	Wis.	1,756	2,839	2,419	7,014	59	1,925	8,998
	Mich.	235	370	2,417	3,022	165	1,367	4,554
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	-	15	216	231	-	-	-
	Total	2,635	3,224	5,052	10,911	224	3,355	14,259
Cottonwood	Minn.	44	-	-	44	-	-	44
	Wis.	125	99	-	224	326	-	550
	Mich.	-	-	137	137	-	-	137
	Total	169	99	137	405	326	-	731
Elm	Minn.	6	-	-	6	-	-	6
	Wis.	1,185	2,904	47	4,136	1	-	4,137
	Mich.	-	-	763	763	-	-	763
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	52	86	603	741	-	-	-
	Total	1,243	2,990	1,413	5,646	1	-	4,906
Maple, hard	Minn.	25	-	-	25	-	-	25
	Wis.	211	5,286	2,016	7,513	102	2,342	9,957
	Mich.	-	114	977	1,091	-	10	1,101
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	200	226	1,436	1,862	-	-	-
	Total	436	5,626	4,429	10,491	102	2,352	11,083
Maple, soft	Minn.	40	-	-	40	-	-	40
	Wis.	410	1,424	255	2,089	355	11	2,455
	Mich.	-	-	111	111	-	-	111
	Total	450	1,424	366	2,240	355	11	2,606
Oak	Minn.	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Wis.	1,029	7,196	402	8,627	544	59	9,230
	Mich.	-	6	85	91	-	-	91
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	-	5	175	180	-	-	-
	Total	1,030	7,207	662	8,899	544	59	9,322
Walnut	Minn.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Wis.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Mich.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	294	370	1,588	2,252	-	-	-
	Total	294	370	1,588	2,252	-	-	-
Misc. species	Minn.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Wis.	31	146	20	197	200	-	397
	Mich.	-	-	109	109	-	-	109
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	6	217	49	272	-	-	-
	Total	37	363	178	578	200	-	506
All species	Minn.	3,035	-	-	3,035	-	145	3,180
	Wis.	6,148	23,788	5,918	35,854	1,726	4,338	41,918
	Mich.	235	495	5,315	6,045	165	1,388	7,598
	Exported <sup>3/</sup>	552	920	4,067	5,539	-	-	-
	Total	9,970	25,203	15,300	50,473	1,891	5,871	52,696

<sup>1/</sup> Vertical columns of figures under box heading "Production by states" represents the quantity of veneer logs cut in each state.

<sup>2/</sup> Central States and small amounts from New York State and Africa.

<sup>3/</sup> Veneer logs shipped to mills outside Lake States Region.



Table 2.--Geographic origin and destination of veneer logs received by Lake States plants, 1963

Species	Percent of veneer logs originating from:					Percent of veneer logs received by plants in:		
	Minn.	Wis.	Mich.	1/ Other	Canada	Minn.	Wis.	Mich.
Aspen	61	12	22	-	5	64	21	15
Ash	23	64	11	2	-	-	96	4
Basswood	38	48	13	1	-	20	75	5
Beech	-	28	72	-	-	-	59	41
Birch	18	22	34	1	25	5	63	32
Cottonwood	23	13	19	45	-	6	75	19
Elm	24	59	17	-	-	-	84	16
Maple, hard	2	49	27	1	21	-	90	10
Maple, soft	17	55	14	14	-	2	94	4
Oak	11	77	5	6	1	-	99	1
Walnut	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Misc. hdwds.	6	29	25	40	-	-	78	22
All species	18	46	21	4	11	6	80	14
Previous survey year 1962	18	41	23	6	12	5	79	16

1/ Central States and small amounts from New York State and Africa.

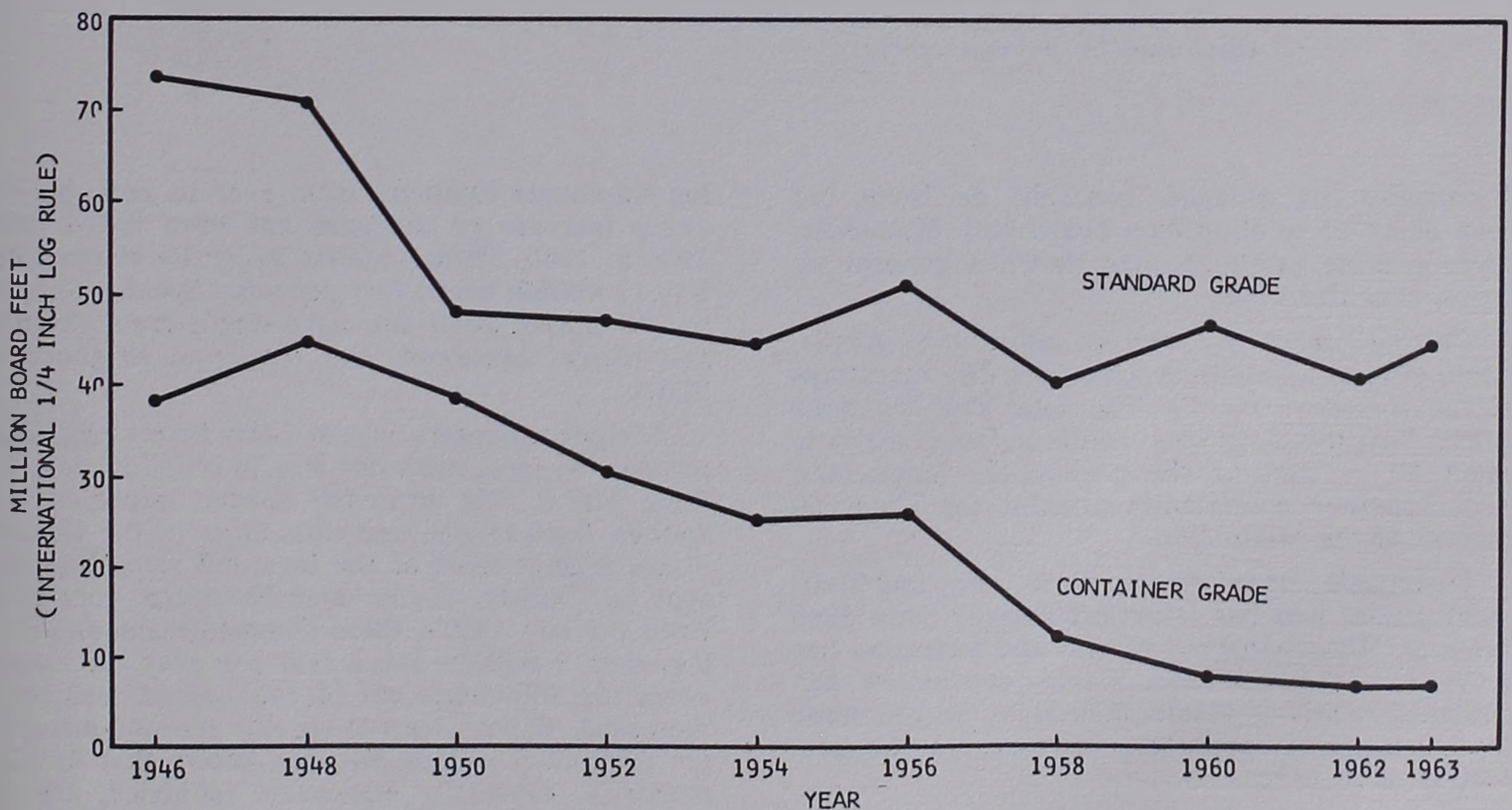


FIGURE 1. — Veneer log production, Lake States, 1946-1963.



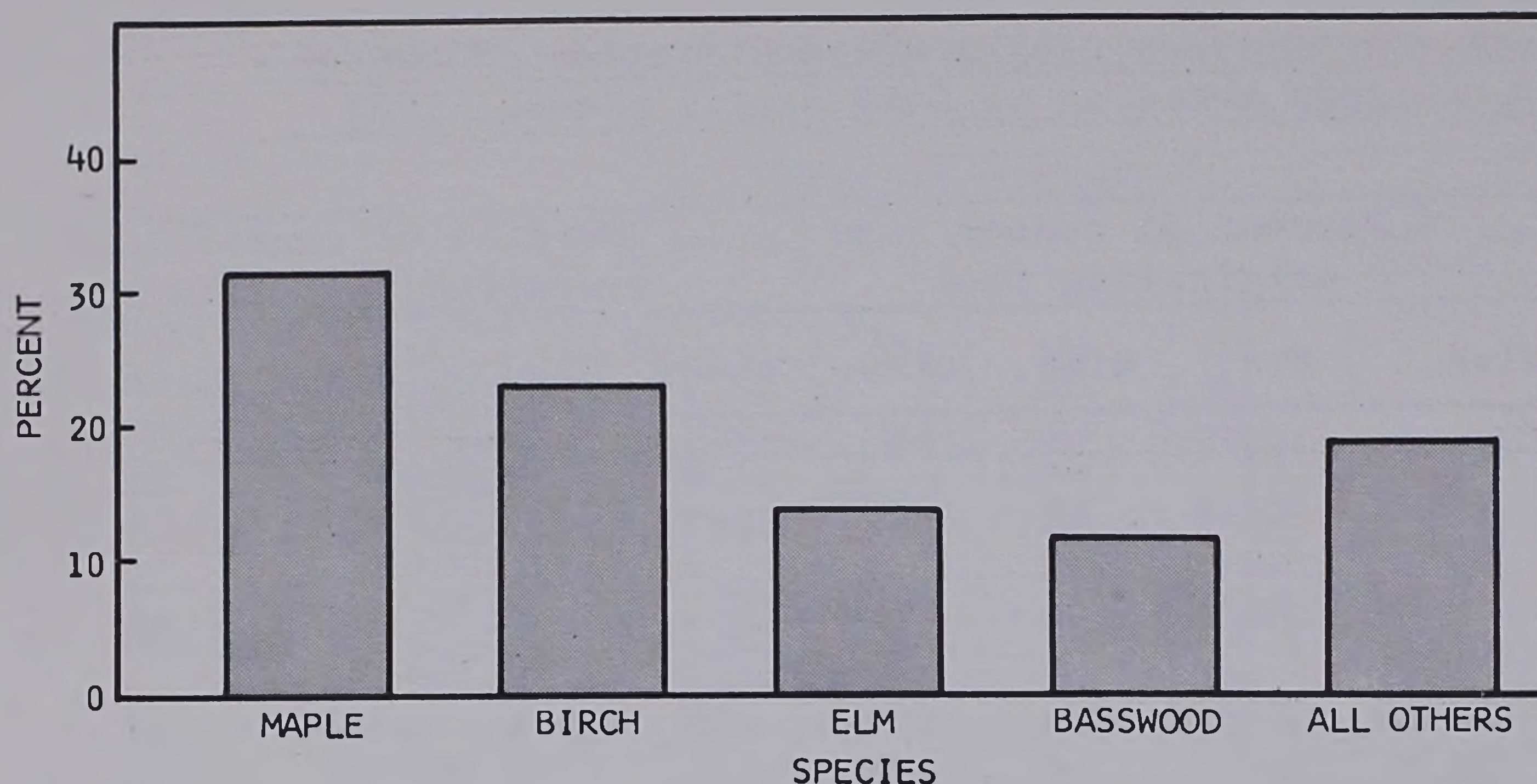


FIGURE 2. — Percent of total cut by specified species, Lake States; averages for 1946-1963.

Table 3.--Veneer log production by specified species and year by State, Lake States

(Thousand board feet - Int'l 1 1/4-inch log rule)

Species	Minnesota			Wisconsin			Michigan		
	1946	1954	1963	1946	1954	1963	1946	1954	1963
Maple	80	1,100	890	7,620	7,780	7,050	33,570	12,060	4,800
Birch	390	820	2,640	4,120	4,200	3,220	21,460	12,310	5,050
Elm	350	1,490	1,240	8,190	6,490	2,990	9,890	2,520	1,410
Basswood	1,140	3,260	2,540	5,520	3,810	3,210	3,960	2,130	860
Other <sup>1/</sup>	540	3,710	2,660	3,820	4,830	8,730	9,970	5,490	3,180
Total	2,500	10,380	9,970	29,270	27,110	25,200	78,850	34,510	15,300

<sup>1/</sup> "Other" includes oak, ash, aspen, beach, walnut, cottonwood, and small amounts of other species.

Wisconsin's cut, although generally declining, has been about 25 to 30 million board feet. Minnesota, never a large producer, has shown a general increase over this time.

Cutting trends by species show that maple, birch, elm, and basswood have been the mainstays of the industry (fig. 2). The total cut has gone down, but these species continue to contribute about 80 percent of the production. Maple and birch together consistently account for about 50 percent of the production.

Michigan's cut of maple, birch, elm, and basswood veneer logs has fallen off sharply since 1946 (table 3). Wisconsin's cut of elm and basswood has declined, but birch and maple production has remained relatively stable. Minnesota, on the other hand, has shown moderate increases in the production of these species.

To supplement local production, some mills obtain logs from other States and Canada. Incoming

log shipments fluctuate from year to year, but no sharp increase or decrease has been noted from 1946 to 1963. These imports generally range from 8 to 12 million board feet per year. Species shipped in are mostly birch and hard maple from Canada, and maple, basswood, and oak from neighboring States.

Timber operators in the Lake States ship logs not only to local mills but also to mills outside the Lake States. The principal species exported are walnut, hard maple, and elm. Mills in the Central States receive most of the logs, but some logs are sent to Canada, Japan, and European countries. Until the late 1950's, these shipments amounted to less than 1 million board feet per year. In recent years log shipments out of the Lake States have increased. Export figures on this type of material are difficult to obtain; but it is known that foreign countries, especially European countries, are in the market for elm and walnut, and an increase in procurement activities has been noted.